



Brexit crisis returns as Euro elections loom

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**Tory daggers are out  
for Theresa May**



# Socialist Worker

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## JOIN THE REBELLION



PICTURE: FRANCESCA HARRIS/EXTINCTION REBELLION

**HOW EXTINCTION  
REBELLION PROTESTS  
ROCKED POLITICS**  
>>PAGES 3, 4&5 and 6

# NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL

### PROTEST

Get set to rage  
against Trump

DONALD TRUMP is coming to Britain for a three-day state visit from 3 June.

Everyone should join protests against the racist, misogynist, ruling class warrior. Take to the streets with the message—Trump out, Tories out, no to racism, austerity, sexism, war and climate change.

Together Against Trump has already set out its plans.

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### SUDAN



**Sudan uprising  
fights for control  
of the state**

THE FIGHT for change in Sudan is growing stronger as ordinary people battle in streets and workplaces for democracy and justice.

Hundreds of thousands packed the streets of Khartoum last week, the largest crowds to gather in the capital since the fall of dictator Omar al-Bashir.

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### RESISTANCE

School's out as 600,000 join strike in Poland

AN ALL-OUT education strike in Poland is deepening as workers develop new forms of organisation to run the action.

It's the biggest strike in the country since 1993. As union leaders have retreated, workers have set up their own committees to run the action.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'The Conservative Party notoriously has two default settings: complacency or panic'**

Tory MP Damian Green

**'Extinction Rebellion is rapidly turning itself into an utter irrelevance'**

Lord Blunkett, Labour former home secretary

**'Extinction Rebellion consists entirely of top-knotted hipsters and berserk menopausal women in tie-dye outfits'**

Rod Liddle in the Times newspaper maintains the usual press approach to protests

**'Surely this is the time for the protesters to take their pink boat to Tiananmen Square'**

Tory MP Boris Johnson joins in the 'I care about the climate, but don't have protests' choir



# Profits go up for firm denying benefits as one victim dies

A SIX STONE emaciated man who was deemed "fit to find work" has died. But the company running the tests that deny people benefits is rolling in profit.

Stephen Smith died last week after struggling with a number of severe health problems.

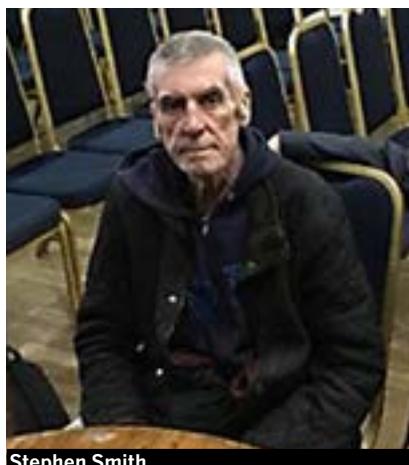
A fitness for work assessment by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) saw him denied vital benefits.

His case was known because shocking images showed the 64 year old in hospital—after he was admitted with pneumonia.

However, despite his obvious poor health and worrying weight loss, he was forced to get a pass out from hospital to go and fight the decision by the DWP—which repeatedly denied him crucial benefits and insisted he was fit and capable of finding work.

Maximus is the US corporation that carries out "fitness to work" tests to see if disabled people are well enough to get a job and so receive less in benefits.

The company took over Work



Stephen Smith

2013, was £114 million. Even in 2016, its first full year of service, Maximus was paid £155 million.

The latest accounts, covering 2017, show Maximus made a £26 million profit.

Yet last year some 68 percent of those who appealed against Maximus's judgement that they weren't eligible for employment support allowance were successful.

Another big earner for Maximus is Remploy.

This was founded as a publicly-owned company employing disabled people in its factories and workshops in 1946.

It began to close "sheltered" workshops in 2008.

The government sold the remaining business—running "welfare to work" schemes to help disabled people into jobs—to Maximus in 2014.

Maximus now has a £49 million turnover and has made £7 million profit from Remploy, running a variety of government-funded employment schemes.

Capability Assessments from the discredited Atos 2015.

Since then its earnings have risen by tens of millions of pounds compared to its loathed predecessor.

The DWP paid Maximus £187 million in 2018. The maximum Atos made, in

HSBC CHIEF executive John Flint was one of a number of bosses to boycott Saudi Arabia's Future of Investment "Davos in the Desert" conference. It came just after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. But now the Saudi state oil company Saudi Aramco has issued £10 billion of bonds on the London markets. HSBC signed up as a well-paid "bookrunner". As did bank JP Morgan, whose boss Jamie Dimon shunned the conference—as did the head of the Stock Exchange David Schwimmer.



JEREMY Clarkson moved left—he couldn't move right—sort of. He wrote, "There are bits of a socialist programme we'd do well to examine." So horrified is he by posh shops he moaned, "This, is the beginning of the end for capitalism." But he prays "every morning and night, that Jeremy Corbyn never takes control".

## Theresa who? Being a Tory is a mug's game

TORY CANVASSERS are refusing to mention "toxic" Theresa May as they try to woo people ahead of next month's local elections.

Unhappy activists reckon she is a liability as they campaign.

Grassroots Conservatives chair Ed Costelloe said, "Most people canvassing are saying this is worse than anything before."

North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association chair Jan French added, "I don't talk about May at all."

We are having a tough time on the doorsteps."

Tory activist Chris Rose said May had "made wearing a blue rosette toxic".

GOOD NEWS for the prime minister. Theresa May toby jugs are outselling the Margaret Thatcher version in parliament's gift shop. Winston Churchill is the most popular option, while Anthony Eden jugs are proving difficult to shift.

Bad news for Gordon Brown. He's apparently sold out.



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## Tax avoidance is doing politics differently

NEIL DAVIDSON is the treasurer of Change UK. He is also the partner of Anna Soubry, the Change UK MP and former Tory.

Davidson was among rich investors who took part in Eclipse film partnerships.

They have now been shut down by HMRC. Eclipse Film Partners No 38, bought distribution rights to a film. The partnership borrowed money then sought to set the substantial interest payments against its members' own personal tax.

Thirty investors, including Davidson,



contributed an average of £1.77 million each.

The tax relief worked out at around £4 million each and allowed them to earn a potential average of around £9 million without paying tax.

Davidson is chair of Optibiotix Health and a non-executive director of the supermarket group Morrisons.



## Wimpey boss gets a cheaper house

TAYLOR WIMPEY is planning to give its chief executive Pete Redfern a £436,000 discount on the asking price of a luxury apartment.

The firm had originally set the price of the flat in London at £2.48 million.

It is proposing to sell it to Redfern for £2.04 million.

Redfern is one of the highest paid executives in Britain, last year receiving £3.15 million in salary, pension and benefits.

He has been paid some £38.67 million over the past ten years.

The apartment is in Palace View, a nine-storey luxury block on the Thames.

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£4.2 million**

amount granted by Ministry of Justice for legal representation for prison and probation service staff at inquests into deaths in custody in 2017

**£92,000**

amount granted by Ministry of Justice in legal aid for representation of families bereaved by deaths in custody at inquests in 2017

## Homelessness is just hype

THE TORY candidate for London mayor dismissed the NHS funding crisis and homelessness as "all hype".

Shaun Bailey posted a clip of him talking to a man called Louis on Twitter.

Louis questions why Shaun is a Tory and says, "People are homeless, people aren't getting help, money's going to places it shouldn't be going, the NHS is suffering."

Shaun, a London Assembly member, said, "But all of that is hype!"

Shaun Bailey



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# Where next for this new movement of rebellion?

by SARAH BATES

**ACTIVISTS FROM** the Extinction Rebellion (XR) movement for climate justice are busy preparing for the next steps.

Thousands of XR rebels have blockaded and occupied roads, bringing whole sections of London to a grinding halt. Hundreds marched from Marble Arch to Parliament Square on Tuesday.

And on Monday—the eighth day of rebellion—hundreds broke into small groups in the evening to debate the future of the rebellion. This was a “citizens’ assembly”—a key demand from XR (see below).

XR wants a group of ordinary people to guide and oversee the necessary political and economic changes needed to take action on climate change. People with roles and responsibilities within XR addressed the crowd from the stage in Marble Arch.

Stephanie, speaking from the “self-organised working group”, promised that XR members would be consulted on critical decisions. These included when to call off the rebellion, when to negotiate with the government and how to present XR’s demands.

Each smaller group was asked to consider the question “how do we as a movement want to move forward—what are our next steps?”

Sarah from the political strategy team asked everyone to consider “how do we move on if the government refuses to engage with XR?”

She said activists could stay at Marble Arch or withdraw from the occupation and continue with action in their town and cities.

In the feedback session, a huge variety of ideas came from each group. Some wanted to leave Marble Arch “strong and on our own terms”.

Others wanted to stay—there was loud applause when one XR member



ACTIVISTS ON Waterloo Bridge (above). Cops carry a protester off the bridge as they clear it out (above, right)

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

## BACK STORY

**Climate change activists have been blockading parts of central London since 15 April**

- They were moved by cops from three of the four sites during the Easter weekend
- On the eighth day of actions, hundreds gathered to discuss the next steps
- A “citizens’ assembly” was organised to hear about activists’ experience

from Bristol said their group wanted to “continue to escalate” and “keep up the momentum while we’re strong and united”.

One group wanted to put a deadline on government negotiations.

“If a minister has agreed to speak to us by Thursday we will leave voluntarily—if they don’t, we escalate the action,” they said.

One of the most well-received contributions was the suggestion that XR in Britain should embrace a demand used by the US group.

It calls for a just transition that prioritises indigenous communities,



black people and the poorest. Many groups wanted to take the protests into the heart of the financial sector, while others called for attention-grabbing stunts in Buckingham Palace and other tourist areas.

Building XR nationally was also a strong theme, with many people giving their thoughts on how to fight back in their own towns and cities.

Some speakers emphasised the importance of individual actions such as tree planting. One activist called for everyone to “be a good example in ourselves while demanding systematic change”.

Organisers said they would feed ideas from the assembly into a database—but gave no sense of a timescale for decisions.

After the citizens’ assembly, Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) activists rallied to say “climate refugees welcome here”. Mario, a Chilean refugee and member of SUTR said, “Climate catastrophe will particularly affect poorest countries. The effects of Cyclone Idai have been devastating.

“The rich can raise £1 billion for Notre Dame but cyclone victims haven’t received enough aid.”

## What's your story?

Email with your ideas  
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Debates over how to deal with our rulers

SOME XR activists on Monday set out what had been achieved in such a short time.

Sophie from the “media and messaging” group said they had created an “international movement of truth tellers”.

A spokesperson from the political strategy team defended XR against attacks from some in the media.

“This is a movement for all of us, and we want a politics where we can all be heard,” he said.

Kofi from the XR international solidarity network said activists in Britain could “export the XR branding to indigenous communities”.

“They have their own information and have been resisting for hundreds of years,” he said.

Kofi called for citizens’ assemblies across the world that connect with each other. “We are not leaving change-making to corrupt financial institutions—we cannot leave our human family to them,” he said.

Ronan from the media and messaging team implored journalists to



Debating into the night

tell the truth about the ecological emergency.

“BBC—if you change, every other media organisation will follow you,” he said.

Someone from the police liaison team said, “We are trying to negotiate a line between challenging the government and the system but not challenging the police.

“On the contrary, we respect police.”

Big cheers erupted through the crowd when he said that there had been “over 1,000 arrests and no reports of any injury to police”.

## Ideas from the assemblies

WITHIN A small discussion group Beth said she was “worried about how people will react after coming back to work after the bank holiday”.

Protester Jolly argued that “we need to find a different space. People are determined, they’re amazing and we have the space to celebrate that,” she said.

Jonah said that stopping the camp meant “the risk is the media move on. We have their attention and we don’t want to lose that”.

Discussion in

the group moved beyond the immediate future of the rebellion and onto wider solutions to tackle the climate crisis.

“I believed there wasn’t enough money—but then I read what happened to Notre Dame,” said Emma.

“They were able to raise money for that—the money is there.”

Some in the group suggested dramatic stunts to show the reality of extreme weather. Others wanted to perform direct action in the City financial district to “create something the city decision makers can’t ignore”.



Part of the rebellion



School students will strike again

**Global Climate Strike for Future**  
24 May Go to [bit.ly/24MayStrike](http://bit.ly/24MayStrike)

# Rebellion has shifted politics on the climate

A new movement to demand action over climate change has changed British politics, argues Sarah Bates

**DIRECT ACTION** called by the Extinction Rebellion (XR) organisation has mobilised tens of thousands of people to demand climate justice.

The devastating impact of climate chaos has been highlighted by an "International Rebellion" coordinated by XR (see right).

Last week saw climate chaos shoot to the top of the news agenda—extensive coverage has featured in every mainstream newspaper and TV broadcast. It's being discussed in workplaces, universities, in supermarkets and on buses.

In central London activists occupied Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Parliament Square and Waterloo Bridge from last Monday morning. Each occupation was held by a dedicated group of activists, but many more people dropped in during the day or volunteered for night shifts.

Activist Lora signed up a month ago to help with admin, but soon found herself on an overnight shift in Marble Arch. "It's really uplifting to be here," she told Socialist Worker. "I was part of the wellbeing team until 1.30am handing out tea and snacks to people. I've never done anything like this before."

"I was nervous before I got here because it was out of my comfort zone. But as soon as I arrived I felt better, the atmosphere is great" she said.

**Organised** Alongside existing XR supporters the week of action has brought together students, experienced environmental activists and those in the wider labour movement.

A trade union delegation organised by Campaign against Climate Change visited the Marble Arch and Oxford Circus occupations on Friday.

Campaign chair Suzanne Jeffery celebrated the "resilience and organisation" of rebels and said it was "hugely inspiring to see the movement make such an impact".

"Climate change is a class issue"

she added. "The poorest in society will benefit most from action on climate change."

XR reported that over 50,000 people have signed up to the civil

## Tell the truth

The government must tell the truth by declaring a climate emergency and work with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change

## Act now

The government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

## Beyond politics

The government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice



THOUSANDS HAVE packed central London to demand action on climate change

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

disobedience group since the protests began.

All of XR's demands are directed squarely at the Tory government (see below left).

This is a strength for the movement, as activists only have to agree with three central points to join in. This broad basis for supporting XR, alongside imaginative stunts, has stirred thousands into action.

**Occupying** XR has a big challenge—how to translate the energy of the rebellion into something more long-term.

The organisation says it will keep occupying until the government agrees to negotiations.

The movement for the climate has to get bigger—and more diverse. It has to link the questions of ecological

justice with concrete battles for green jobs, insulated homes and resources to deal with extreme weather.

Climate change is set to get worse, and quickly. It will begin to impact on ordinary people in Britain—more often and in an increasingly extreme way.

This means a climate change movement will have to continue to build and to fight against a capitalist system that threatens our planet.

## On other pages...

Revolt in France, Sudan and Algeria >> Page 8

## State can't be trusted to take the action needed

MUCH OF the focus has been on the relationship between protesters and the police.

Home secretary Sajid Javid saw a way of bolstering his claim to be one of the front runners in a Tory leadership election. He urged cops to use "full force of the law" against occupiers.

Other politicians were keen to call on the police to intervene, including former Labour home secretary

David Blunkett and London mayor Sadiq Khan.

For the first three days of protests cops maintained a relatively hands-off presence to the occupations.

In dramatic scenes last Wednesday night, hundreds of cops flooded into Parliament Square and dismantled two of the four roadblocks of tents and banners that helped keep traffic off the road.

But activists called in

reinforcements and by last Thursday morning had replenished the roadblocks.

XR has been very keen to portray the police as, at best, neutral.

This can appear plausible when cops have orders to be gentle with protesters. But the friendly veneer slipped once the Met decided it wanted protesters to clear out.

Last Friday afternoon Oxford Circus and Waterloo Bridge began to be emptied.



Audacious acts of vandalism



Audacious acts of vandalism

## Edinburgh action against the climate catastrophe

IN EDINBURGH two days of action last week saw activists organise a festival.

On the following day around 700 people blocked North Bridge for five hours, bringing large parts of the city to a standstill.

Maggie Kelly is a member of XR in Scotland.

She told Socialist Worker, "We wanted to raise awareness of XR's demands

without fear of arrest. "We had lots of difference spaces, training and talks on what climate change solutions might be."

**Disrupting** "There was a discussion about disrupting members of the general public," said Maggie.

"But the issue is, for 30 years or more, they've been trying to press for change

through normal channels and it's not working.

"We feel there's not enough debate, information and educational process in place to provide some sort of counterweight to current political debate."

She added, "We need to keep up the pressure.

"We're not going away, and this isn't the end of it".

## An international movement

LONDON HAS been the centre of activity in Britain, but there has been a global response to the call-out from XR.

The group reported actions in around 80 other countries.

In Oslo, Norway, activists dropped a banner declaring "the generation who will shut down Norwegian oil production have been born—it's us".

At The Hague, in the Netherlands, XR supporters occupied the International Criminal Court with a banner calling

agriculture alongside a choir show.

In New York some 62 people were arrested for blocking the Brooklyn Bridge with a die-in, while two activists climbed lampposts to drop a banner demanding "declare climate emergency".

XR Ireland reports that around 2,000 attended the "day of rebellion" in the capital, Dublin.

In New Zealand activists held a dawn vigil on a beach. In Denmark, blood was poured over the steps of the parliament.

Kampala, Uganda, saw XR activists hold a sit-down outside the parliament building.

Protesting at The Hague

for action against "ecocide".

In New Zealand activists held a dawn vigil on a beach. In Denmark, blood was poured over the steps of the parliament.

A "funeral for the future" march was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, finishing with a sit-down outside the parliament building.

Protesters have been willing carted off by cops

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

## TURN UP HEAT ON SYSTEM BURNING OUR PLANET

**E**XTINGUISH Rebellion (XR) has been a stunning success. Its action has helped to expose the urgency of the threat posed by climate change—and insisted that tackling it cannot be postponed.

The government and the corporations will feel defensive because thousands of people have courageously and defiantly filled the streets.

And millions more will have thought XR was right to rebel.

But the rich will have cheered Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's call to the protesters to allow a return to "business as usual".

Business as usual means continuing the system dominated by the 100 corporations responsible for over 70 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.

It means allowing the oil giants, the bankers and the bosses to continue putting profits before people.

It is this system that needs to be confronted, not championed.

Nothing we can do as individuals will ultimately matter as long as capitalism's ruthless exploitation of people and the

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## XTINCTION Rebellion (XR) has opened new avenues for resistance and given people a new confidence

"business as usual", and it can't be "anti-business as usual" either.

It would be a terrible retreat to see polite lobbying or reliance on "progressive" business or mainstream political parties as the next step.

XR has demonstrated the power of resistance beyond parliament and elections.

It is part of a global process where unexpected movements suddenly become the focus of a bitter and repressed feeling for change.

Now the message of resistance has to be taken to millions of working class people.

They have the power to shut down society, not in just one city or for a few days, but to win fundamental system change.

When asked if a general strike for the climate was a good idea, Thunberg said, "Yes".

We should link climate change to other class questions and demand the union and Labour leaders start fighting the system that produces climate change.

Everyone should think how they can build the climate movement at a local level, support XR's activities and back the next school climate strike on 24 May.

**VOTE LABOUR IN ELECTION**

**L**OCLAL ELECTIONS will take place in 248 English councils on Thursday of next week.

They come as the Tories remain mired in crisis over Brexit.

We don't have illusions in Labour.

Jeremy Corbyn is the most left-wing leader the party has ever had, yet he has made dangerous concessions to the right.

Losing seats in local authorities will weaken them and make it harder to drive through that assault.

That's one reason why Socialist Worker is calling for a vote for

right wing MPs.

And in councils across Britain

Labour in the elections. Another is that a big Labour win will increase the pressure that can force out prime minister Theresa May.

They come as the Tories remain mired in crisis over Brexit.

We don't have illusions in Labour.

But when Labour won a stunning result in the 2017 general election it gave everyone on the left a boost.

A bigger vote for Labour in the council elections will be seen as a victory for Corbyn.

It can be another step towards getting rid of this rotten government.

Labour has driven through cuts to services and attacked jobs.

The Birmingham home care workers are just one example of this.

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## HOW CAPITALISM IS CHOKING THE PLANET

**Camilla Royle** on why we need system change  
**John Sinha** on air pollution

**Plus**

**Bea Kay** on the media's distortions of child abuse  
**Jane Hardy** tells the story of the home care workers' fight  
**Siobhan Brown** celebrates 100 years of the Bauhaus

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS

## Don't miss the boat of climate rebellion

I'M SURE there are very many people who feel the Extinction Rebellion (XR) protests in London over Easter mark a watershed.

First, there is the scale. There have been important direct action movements. Probably the biggest was the Committee of 100's campaign against nuclear weapons in 1961-62.

But I can't think of anything that has been as sustained as this—thousands of people in a week so far of highly disruptive protests in central London.

No doubt the British state, presided over by a weak, divided and distracted government, is on the defensive. But XR's achievement is remarkable.

Secondly, there is the issue. Almost everyone recognises that climate change is happening and is caused by human action. Almost as many people recognise that the establishment has not begun to do what is needed to stop catastrophic increases in global temperatures.

But increasing numbers believe we have little or no time left. A widely read paper by Jem Bendell of Cumbria University argues that the scientific evidence suggests it is "too late to avert a global environmental catastrophe in the lifetimes of people alive today".

Climate change involves a variety of processes that may be on the verge of mutually reinforcing each other. For example, the Arctic is rapidly melting. This could lead to the release into the atmosphere of methane—an even more potent greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>—currently trapped in permafrost.

Bendell cites a study that warned of "atmospheric heating of over 5 degrees within just a few years of such a release".

His conclusion is grim. "We are set for disruptive and uncontrollable levels of climate change," he writes. "I mean in your own life."

"With the power down, soon you wouldn't have water coming out of your tap. You will depend on your neighbours for food and some warmth. You will become malnourished. You won't know whether to stay or go. You will fear being violently killed before starving to death."

Climate change involves non-linear processes, where quite small changes may suddenly trigger a qualitative transformation of the entire system. So it's hard to say whether or not Bendell is right that "civilisational collapse" is inevitable in the near future.

### Swept

But more and more people fear that he is. It is this that has swept so many people behind XR's banner and that motivates the school student strikes.

This poses a challenge for the left. There are various great Marxist studies that show climate change and the broader process of environmental destruction are a consequence of the drive for capital accumulation.

Ian Angus's excellent blog Climate & Capitalism constantly hammers home this message.

But this kind of theoretical insight still needs to be translated into political practice. Like the big parties, socialists have been obsessed and divided by the Brexit crisis. Meanwhile, the organised left has been largely missing from the XR protests.

It's easy to pick holes in XR's strategy. On the one hand, The Ecologist magazine says, "Extinction Rebellion is forging an international solidarity network to challenge capitalism, neo-colonialism and extractive industries."

On the other, the Financial Times newspaper describes co-founder Gail Bradbrook, "dashing between fundraising discussions with a London hedge-fund owner and meetings to rally Extinction Rebellion volunteers".

A hedge-fund owner? A War on Want report in 2016 found that firms listed on the London Stock Exchange control £166 billion worth of coal just in Africa and are drilling for oil in 27 African countries.

It would be absolutely criminal to make contradictions like this an excuse for not taking part in these new climate movements. Every new struggle draws in many people with a mixture of sometimes incompatible ideas.

The problem up to now has been that the sheer enormity of the threat of climate catastrophe has tended to induce passivity and despair. Now this is changing. Good—we should be part of this.



CHURCHES WERE bombed as part of a co-ordinated action on the Easter weekend

## Brutal state repression lies behind attacks in Sri Lanka

by YURI PRASAD

**AT LEAST 290 people were killed and hundreds more injured in a series of eight bomb attacks in Sri Lanka on Sunday.**

In a co-ordinated action bombs hit Christian churches and major hotels frequented by tourists and the wealthy on the island.

The blasts tore through packed Easter services, scattering body parts among pews and building rubble.

Hospitals were overwhelmed by large numbers of the seriously injured.

By Monday afternoon no group had claimed responsibility for the appalling attack.

But the Sri Lankan government said that Islamist militant groups are its main suspects.

Prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe declared a state of emergency and shut down all social media.

### Violence

Sri Lanka is grimly familiar with campaigns of violence.

A civil war between the government—which identifies with the country's Sinhalese Buddhist majority—and the Tamil minority raged for 25 years.

The Tamil independence movement was finally crushed in May 2009.

The Sri Lankan military used the utmost brutality to

suppress the Tamils, including bombs, chemical weapons and concentration camps.

According to the United Nations (UN) some 40,000 civilians were killed in the final stages of the war.

Many of those in government had a personal hand in the slaughter, dictating that the military should target hospitals and even Red Cross ships bringing aid.

The political establishment maintains close connections to militant Sinhala Buddhist parties that regard all Tamils, as well as Christians and



Sri Lankan prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

Muslims, as inferior. These groups ensure that attacks on religious minorities are common.

Last year, there were 86 verified incidents of threats or violence against Christians.

Sinhala militia were also responsible for anti-Muslim riots last year. Many victims complained that mobs were guided by Buddhist monks while police looked on.

### Mistakes

"There were mistakes on the part of the local police in implementing the law," a government spokesperson admitted at the time.

"Some of the attacks happened in front of them."

In the wake of this week's bombings world leaders, including Theresa May and Donald Trump, were quick to offer their condolences to the people of Sri Lanka.

But for years both countries have been happy to prop up a vicious regime that feels free to use violence.

The British government signed export licences for weapons shipments to Sri Lanka just months after the damning UN report into government atrocities.

Those who cultivate ethnic and religious divisions on the island have long had blood on their hands.

Hope must lie with those who fight against oppression and for working class unity.

## Divide and rule legacy

**JUST OVER 20 million people live in Sri Lanka, on an island about a quarter the size of Britain.**

It's just a few dozen miles off the south east coast of India.

The majority describe themselves as Buddhists and speak Sinhalese.

### Religions

But there are significant minorities of differing religions and languages.

Sri Lanka was ruled as Ceylon by the British until 1948.

The empire used ethnic divisions in a bid

to solidify its rule and imposed English as the official language.

Independence gave rise to a power struggle that saw differing groups use those divisions to boost their own power.

A battle over language came to define the conflict and eventually Sinhalese replaced English.

This marginalised sections of the middle class who generally spoke English and Tamil.

The logic of divide and rule was extended to all ethnic and religious groups.

# European Union's border plan will put more refugees at risk

Europe's rulers are split between those who want stronger external borders and those who back stronger national borders. But all their policies are deadly, says Tomáš Tengely-Evans

**THE EUROPEAN** Union (EU) is pushing for stronger border controls in a bid to make it harder for refugees to make it to safety.

The European Parliament backed proposals to beef up the Frontex border police last Wednesday. The move will increase the force from 1,500 guards to 10,000 by 2027—and give it more powers.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, the European Commissioner for Migration and Citizenship, said Frontex would now be able to turn migrants away at the border.

The beefed-up agency will make it easier to deport refugees who have made it into Europe.

This will include Frontex “identifying irregularly staying non-EU nationals”.

And it will also allow for “stronger cooperation with non-EU countries” to send refugees back.

Guy Verhofstadt, chief Brexit coordinator for the European parliament, hailed the “10,000 extra border officers” as a step forward.

“For four years we fought to get a European Border & Coast Guard,” he said.

“EU countries were blocking, but we managed to get it done.”

Verhofstadt added that the new immigration rules should be implemented now, not by 2027.

He said, “We need to better protect our external borders to keep our internal EU borders open.”

Some EU member states have resisted attempts to increase the powers of Frontex.

This includes far right and racist governments in Austria, Hungary and Italy, which fear their national border forces losing powers.

And they oppose any attempts to help refugees who have made it into Europe—even the most meagre ones by the EU.

## Brutal

But the Frontex policy shows that the brutal treatment of refugees isn't just down to national governments.

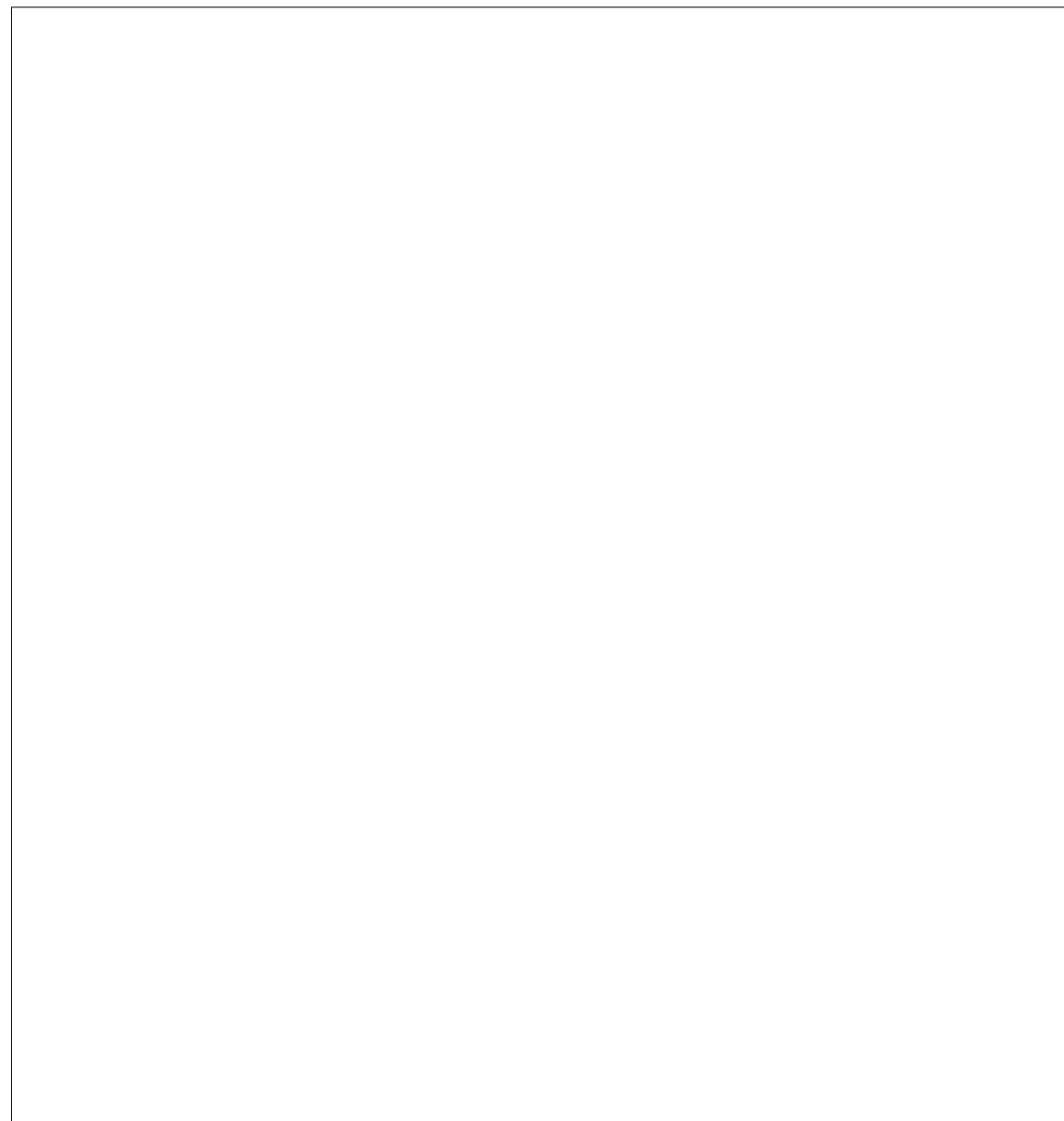
The EU is a regional capitalist bloc that helps member states to compete internationally with larger rivals such as the US and China.

This means it wants money, goods and services and labour to move relatively freely within its borders, but tight control of what's allowed in and out of its territory.

The EU's rulers are split between “centrist” politicians who want stronger external borders and far right and racist politicians who want stronger national borders.

Either way, refugees die in the Mediterranean.

And those who make it across the



RACIST EUROPEAN Union border rules put desperate refugees in danger

Mediterranean face police brutality and desperate living conditions.

The European Parliament's decision came just as refugee charities warned of a surge in the number of unaccompanied children trapped at Britain's border in Calais.

The number has almost doubled from 150 to 281 in the last three months.

Stand Up To Racism and Care4Calais plan a delegation to northern France on Saturday.

The aim is to build a movement in solidarity with refugees and to force the government to open the border.

## On other pages...

Southall '79—when police killed Blair Peach >>Pages 10&11

## Blair scapegoats migrants

TONY BLAIR blamed migrants for the rise of the far right last week.

The warmonger and former Labour prime minister claimed that “failures around integration” are “partly responsible for a reaction against migration”.

Blair said that migrants have a “duty to integrate, to accept the rules, laws and norms of our society”.

And he added, “The word multiculturalism has been misinterpreted as meaning a

justified refusal to integrate.”

The likes of the far right AfD party in Germany have been fuelled by racism against Muslims, migrants and refugees pushed by mainstream politicians and the press.

This included Blair's Labour governments during the 2000s, which scapegoated Muslims and asylum seekers.

Blair's intervention shows that lining up behind the “centre” is no solution to the rise of racism and the far right.

## TOMMY ROBINSON Protest at High Court on 14 May

NAZI TOMMY Robinson will appear at the High Court in London on Tuesday 14 May.

The attorney general ruled last month that Robinson should face a retrial for allegedly committing contempt of court. He was jailed for 13 months last May after filming outside a sexual abuse trial in Leeds.

But he was released on bail after the Court of Appeal ruled that he should face a retrial.

Judge Nicholas Hilliard referred the case to the attorney general



Tommy Robinson PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

after two hearings last autumn.

Robinson called on his supporters to show support during his retrial—and suggested he might appear in Manchester on Thursday of this week.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and Unite Against Fascism have called a counter-mobilisation outside the High Court. A statement from SUTR said, “It's important that an anti-racist and anti-fascist presence is out on the streets of London that day to oppose his message.”

When Robinson was in prison, his supporters mobilised 15,000 onto the streets of London last June. They have not been able to get those sorts of numbers since, but Robinson and the far right could still benefit from the Tories' Brexit crisis.

Anti-fascists must mobilise against them.

## FRANCE

## Yellow Vests take on cops

RIOT POLICE and Yellow Vest protesters battled in the centre of Paris last Saturday as numbers on the streets rose for the second week in a row.

Motorbikes, bins, bicycles and cars were set alight on roads and pavements around Place de la République.

Paris police said authorities detained over 140 people during the protests and carried out spot checks on more than 14,000 people trying to enter the capital to demonstrate.

The twenty-third successive Saturday of protests saw anger at the attempt by president Emmanuel Macron to demand "national unity" in the wake of the fire at Notre Dame cathedral.

Some carried banners attacking the super-rich who have pledged almost £1 billion to rebuild the cathedral.

One demonstrator said, "There are millions for stones and there is no money for the people in the street? The homeless? The badly paid?"



Cops attacked Yellow Vests

Marie, a local government worker, told Socialist Worker, "It's taken huge courage to keep fighting for more than five months. The police have become more thuggish because they know they have Macron's support."

"It is great that the demonstrations continue but we need to hit Macron harder. That must mean strikes."

Sections of Yellow Vests have joined with groups of organised workers for "a common front" against a government that "wants to destroy everything".

Some sections of the CGT union federation, Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed left party and some of the Yellow Vests want to "consolidate and converge all ongoing struggles".

"We want to see this date of 27 April as a major turning point," said Emmanuel Lepine from the CGT chemicals section. This is an implied criticism of the failure of the union leaders to back protests.

Major mobilisations are also being prepared for 1 May and for another national day of strikes and protests on 9 May. Yellow Vests struggle to reinvent democracy—turn to page 15

# Sudan uprising battles for control of the state

by CHARLIE KIMBER

## THE FIGHT for change in Sudan has grown stronger. But there are major challenges to come.

Ordinary people are battling to seize control from an undemocratic elite.

After strikes and protests removed dictator Omar al-Bashir on 11 April, an army-led military council remains in control. It still insists it will rule for two years and that there cannot be civilian government before that.

But the people whose action drove out Bashir have not stopped their mobilisations.

In fact they have stepped them up.

Hundreds of thousands packed the streets outside Sudan's defence ministry in the capital Khartoum on Thursday and Friday of last week demanding an end to military rule.

It was the largest turnout since the fall of Bashir.

Protesters chanted, "Freedom and revolution are the choice of the people," and "Civilian rule, civilian rule".

A sit-in outside the military headquarters is seeing intense self-organisation with teams of volunteers coordinating "mobilisation, cooking, guarding, cleaning, cheering, singing, and all forms of support".

There are now sit-ins outside five other army units, and anti-military demonstrations in many more.

## Desperate

People who have lived for years in desperate poverty in refugee camps in Darfur are holding near-continuous protests. "At last there is hope, we must not let this pass," said one demonstrator.

On Wednesday of last week Khartoum saw mass demonstrations

## ORDINARY PEOPLE are ramping up the action

by journalists, doctors and other health workers "in support of the Sudanese revolution".

The day before hundreds of staff and graduates of the University of Khartoum marched from the university to a sit-in in support of the protesters and their demands.

One important body is the Forces of the Declaration of Freedom and Change (FDPC).

This is centred on the Sudanese Professionals Association, the group of teachers, pharmacists, doctors, journalists and others who

played a big part in coordinating the action. An FDPC statement on Thursday rightly said, "Our people's ongoing strikes and protests represent the guarantor for carrying out the revolution's aims."

It called for a move to a Transitional Civil Authority (TCA) with a presidential council, ministers and a council to carry out legislative tasks.

The TCA would be a further challenge to the army and could create two centres of government. But it will be chosen by negotiations at

the top, not elected. The movement against the military will be strongest if there is organisation, elections, accountability and direction from those who are making the revolution.

And there will need to be deep economic change. Major institutions remain under the exclusive control of Bashir's National Congress Party.

Workers and the poor must take them back.

For a longer version of this article go to [bit.ly/Sudanrevolt](http://bit.ly/Sudanrevolt)

## ALGERIA

# Protests grow bigger despite a brutal police crackdown

A PROTESTER in Algeria has died in hospital of injuries sustained while protesting. Yettou Ramzi's relatives said this was because he was beaten by police.

Despite increased police repression, protests continue in many towns and cities.

The weekly protests have effectively overturned a ban since 2002 on such mobilisations in Algiers and some other towns and cities. Students and university workers have launched indefinite boycotts of classes, with one source claiming activists at 98 percent of Algeria's 105 universities have backed the call.

Strikes have taken place,

particularly in the public sector. And workers have been central to the protest movement.

When energy minister Mohamed Arkab visited state gas firm Sonelgaz's headquarters last week, workers blockaded the entrance to demand he resign.

Arkab was the CEO of Sonelgaz before being brought into former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government.

The Algerian ruling class is trying desperately to manage their losses after protests and strikes forced the resignation of Bouteflika. But it faces a hard task.

Last week head of the constitutional council Tayeb Belaiz

was forced to stand down. He was one of the "3 Bs" protesters targeted. Now there are two left.

In an indication of how toxic the regime has become, other political parties have rejected attempts by interim president Bensalah to hold trials ahead of elections scheduled for 4 July.

The regime has tried to push people's anger against a corrupt clique around Bouteflika—particularly members of his family who benefitted from corruption.

The movement of protests and strikes can win much more than just some changes at the top.

Turn to pages 14&15 for more on Algeria's fight for freedom



Tayeb Belaiz was forced out

## Labour is helping parasites

I WILL be voting Labour in the European Parliament elections and would do so in any council elections.

But I am constantly angered and disappointed that so often Labour councils merely pass on the Tories' attacks.

They often say they don't get enough from the government, but they also make decisions that seem to show a lack of any radical or socialist attitude.

For example, the campaign group Action for Argentina UK has shown that Labour-run Waltham Forest council in north east London has awarded a cleaning contract to a nasty privatising company.

Multinational firm Urbaser was part of a consortium that sued Argentina when the Province of Buenos Aires terminated its water and sewerage contract in July 2006.

Had they been successful, Urbaser would have been awarded a huge settlement taken from public money that could have otherwise been used on poverty relief, health and education.

Its claims were eventually dismissed but significant costs were incurred defending the case.

The contracting out of public services is a cornerstone of neoliberal economic doctrine that has hit both Argentina and Britain.

A Labour council should not be privatising at all, let alone using parasites such as Urbaser.

**Deborah Williams**  
Bristol



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

## Land for a few not the many

WE FOUND out last week that half of England is owned by less than 1 percent of its population

About 25,000 landowners—typically members of the aristocracy and corporations—control half of the country.

Major owners include the Duke of Buccleuch, the queen, several large grouse moor estates, and vacuum-cleaner overlord James Dyson. It's like living in feudal times. Take it back for all of us.

**Bob Richards**  
Bridgend

## We remember David Oluwale

FIFTY YEARS ago last week David Oluwale, a homeless Nigerian man living in Leeds, was last seen running from two policemen. They assaulted him, urinated on him, and wrote "wog" as his nationality on police papers.

He was later found in the River Aire. Two police officers were found guilty of assaulting him, but not manslaughter or murder.

We should remember him.

**Colin Vince**  
On Facebook

## Unions are missing out

IF TRADE unions such as the GMB continue to be hostile to climate campaigners then they are going to become even more irrelevant to young people.

**Mary Burnside**  
Dundee

## Sharing tea with Jeremy?

I'M NOT sure that the Extinction Rebellion activists who protested at Jeremy Corbyn's home chose the best target.

But given one of them had walked for eight days to get there, I think Jeremy could have offered them a cup of tea.

**Peter Lisburne**  
Newcastle

## XR has really cheered me up

I'VE LOVED watching the Extinction Rebellion protests.

In dark times I have felt hopeful again.

**Julie Harrison**  
On Facebook

# Big business loves Trump's welfare state for the richest

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is rightly often criticised as a racist, a sexist and a climate change denier. But we should never forget that he is also a vicious class warrior for the rich.

His tax changes in 2017 were one of the greatest acts of financial chicanery in the modern world.

Sixty of the US's biggest corporations paid \$0—not a single cent—in federal taxes last year.

Amazon, Chevron, General Motors, Goodyear, Halliburton, Honeywell, IBM, Netflix and US Steel were among them.

Together these 60 businesses grabbed over £60 billion in profit.

As a result of Trump's tax cuts for the rich, the rate these firms

are supposed to pay on their profits has fallen from 35 percent to 21 percent.

But they used loopholes and tax breaks to pay nothing according to a report last week.

Most big firms backed Hillary Clinton to be US president and find Trump a disturbing character who cannot be relied on all the time.

But they are lapping up his welfare state for the capitalists.

Trump's tax law will save big business over £1 trillion by 2027.

The tax not paid is a direct theft from poor people across the US who see their incomes stagnant or falling and their services and infrastructure collapsing.

No wonder the number of strikes

has been growing. There are signs of more radical policies from some of those who are running to be the Democrat candidate against Trump in 2020's election.

The idea that everyone is treated equally under capitalism is a myth that would be laughable if it weren't so tragic.

Whether in the US or Britain it's a rigged system where "little people" get hammered and the ones at the top stuff their bank accounts.

I can't wait to see these people forced to pay what they should—or better still have their wealth and power taken away entirely.

**Ali Jones**  
East London

## Stand more clearly with Julian Assange

WHY THE casual coverage of Julian Assange's arrest (Socialist Worker, 17 April)?

Where were the tears of shame and sadness and rage at the sight of a sick man being dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy by British police at the behest of the US authorities?

He faces possible extradition and torture and even the death sentence.

Why has our brilliant paper not reported seriously on his seven-year detention at the Ecuadorian embassy

for telling the truth about US war crimes?

He also told the truth about Britain's collusion with the US torture and rendition programme and about the millions of victims of its bloody and illegal regime-change wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Assange and Chelsea Manning have risked their lives to speak truth to power. We must stand in solidarity with Assange.

**Cathy Porter**  
Oxford

## Shameful for Galloway to back Farage

WHEN HE was good, he was very, very good. When he was bad, he was awful.

I have known George Galloway, a bit, over the years.

I debated against him in 1982 during a student occupation at Glasgow university.

I was a constituent of his in Hillhead.

In 2003, I was named as one of the reasons he was expelled from the Labour Party.

This was because he congratulated me on winning a council seat in



George Galloway  
Preston as an anti-war candidate. From 2004-08 I was on the Respect party's steering committee with him. In 2005 I was in awe of his performance in front of the US Senate. I've

always respected his support for the Palestinians.

I was utterly dumbfounded by his appearance and performance in Big Brother.

I utterly opposed his unionist position during the Scottish referendum.

Last week I was both shocked and disgusted by his support for a vote for Nigel Farage and the Brexit Party in the European elections. It is shameful.

**Michael Lavalette**  
Liverpool



Thousands took to the streets of Southall to stop the Nazi National Front

**F**ORTY YEARS ago this week Blair Peach joined a thousands-strong demonstration against the fascist National Front (NF) in Southall, west London. By the evening Blair had been murdered—clubbed on the head by a police officer.

None of the six cops involved in his murder have ever been charged. Michael Freestone, Anthony Lake, James Scottow, Anthony Richardson, Raymond White and Alan Murray were transferred from the Special Patrol Group (SPG), the Metropolitan Police's riot squad.

And the police only released the findings of their internal inquiry in 2010—which found cops had “almost certainly” killed Blair.

Blair, a teacher from Bow in east London, was a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Anti Nazi League (ANL).

His killing showed how the police and the state can treat protesters and activists—and the brutality they used to protect the Nazis.

The cops ran amok through Southall on Monday 23 April 1979, resulting in 700 arrests, 344 court cases, and hundreds of people injured. The state had deployed some 2,750 officers to make sure the NF could have a rally in the run-up to the general election.

Southall was the heart of the Asian community in London. People from Britain's former colonies had moved there after the Second World War.

It became the site of struggles by Asian workers to organise for trade union recognition and better working conditions—including some major

strikes. It was also a place where people felt keenly the racist attitudes of police. When racists attacked young Asians it was often the victims who were arrested.

In 1970 the police did nothing when a gang of skinheads rampaged through the town.

By holding a meeting right in the heart of Southall, the fascists hoped to intimidate the local Asian population. The area had become a focus for fascist and racist agitation, including the murder of school student Gurdip Singh Chaggar in 1976 (see box).

But its Asian working class and the Southall Youth Movement—knowing they couldn't trust the police—organised to defend themselves against racism.

Balwinder Singh Rana was on the committee that organised the protest against the NF. “The news spread like wild fire,” he remembers. “The NF were being allowed to hold their meeting right in the heart of our town.”

“And immediately the Indian Workers Association called a meeting of all the local organisations.”

The meeting resolved to march on Tory-run Ealing council on Sunday 22 April to hand in a petition demanding the meeting be called off.

And if the council refused, they would hold a sit-down in front of the town hall the following day.

Southall was the heart of the Asian community in London. People from Britain's former colonies had moved there after the Second World War.

It became the site of struggles by Asian workers to organise for trade union recognition and better working conditions—including some major

A ROUND 5,000 people assembled at a Southall car park on the Sunday. The police were about to give them a taste of the treatment that was to come the next day.

Balwinder said, “The car park was surrounded by masses of police on horseback and loads of police on foot.

“As the march proceeded the police began to harass us. And outside the Southall police station, a very convenient place for them, they arrested a young black lad for no other reason than just being a bit exuberant.”

The march moved on after Balwinder and Indian Workers Association head Vishnu Sharma went into the police station and successfully demanded the black man's release. But, soon afterwards, the cops began harassing people again.

“The police proceeded to arrest 15 people, setting the scene for the next day,” Balwinder said.

On the Monday, Southall was in lockdown. Cops poured into the area and riot vans lined many of the roads.

But bus workers and those from nearby factories struck. Local people were ready to come out to defend themselves against the NF.

Jatinder Chohan, a school student who lived in Southall in 1979, said,



# SOUTHALL '79

THE NAZI NATIONAL FRONT CAME TO THE HEART OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY IN WEST LONDON ON 23 APRIL 1979. GUARDED BY THOUSANDS OF RIOT POLICE, THEY WANTED TO HUMILIATE BUT INSTEAD PROVOKED REBELLION. RAMPAGING POLICE ARRESTED SCORES, INJURED MANY AND MURDERED BLAIR PEACH.

TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS LOOKS BACK AT THE CRUCIAL BATTLE AGAINST RACISM

I remember feeling scared and vulnerable, but also realising that something important and momentous was happening.

Our community—as well as supporters from outside formed from many different races and religions—were rising up in one body.

They were rising up to confront the hate that was being allowed to hold court on our doorstep.

They were being prevented from reaching the town hall to make their peaceful protest by the massive presence of the police.”

which had called its own mobilisation, led a protest outside the building.

Balwinder said, “When more and more people began to arrive the police set up roadblocks, hundreds of metres from the town hall.

“By 5pm thousands of people, young and old, men and women, black, Asian and white, had gathered on those four blocked roads.

They were being prevented from reaching the town hall to make their peaceful protest by the massive presence of the police.”

He added, “People were not even being allowed into their own homes that were within the cordoned area.

“It looked like an occupied town.”

Police on foot and on horseback charged at the protesters.

SPG officers drove vans at high speed towards the crowd, before throwing demonstrators into the back of them. Police dogs chased people who tried to get away into side streets.

People heroically fought back for hours in the pouring rain, throwing bricks and other projectiles at the cops. At around 6pm the SPG chased

BLAIR PEACH—teacher, anti-racist and Socialist Workers Party member—on a demonstration against the National Front in Ilford, east London, in 1978 and on a picket of a racist pub in Mile End, east London (below, right)



**B**LAIR'S FRIEND and fellow NUT union member Nick Grant remembers, “Blair was conscious but groggy. He handed over his car keys before leaving with Amanda Leon.

“Blair walked from the ambulance into A&E in Ealing Hospital. Police already understood that there was something to be worried about and they quizzed Amanda who left with Blair's belongings, advising her to call back later for an update.”

The hospital informed Blair's friends at around 11.40pm that he had died in theatre.

“Then sure enough,” Nick added, “within an hour of Blair's death, plainclothes police were banging on the door.

“They clearly knew where we were and what they'd done.”

The Metropolitan Police inquiry found the SPG had a stash of weapons, including unauthorised truncheons, knives, a whip and lead weighted leather stick.

This could have inflicted the sort of blow that killed Blair.

One SPG officer's locker was found full of Nazi regalia.

Around 15,000 people came to Blair's funeral a few days after his death, including Labour MP Tony Benn and TUC union federation president Ken Gill.

It was a testament to Blair's work in the ANL to fight the rise of the NF.

The aim of the ANL was to split the hardcore Nazis from racists who they had managed to pull around themselves.

But Blair was also a revolutionary socialist, who saw the need to get rid of the foul capitalist society that spawns fascism.

As the obituary in Socialist Worker said, “It is the task of all of us to provide the memorial that Blair would have wished for by carrying on his fight against racism and exploitation.”



Southall anti-racists march after the murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar

**Remember Gurdip Singh Chaggar and Blair Peach**

**DEMONSTRATION**  
Saturday 27 April, 2pm.  
Assemble: Featherstone Terrace car park, Southall UB2 4AX

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

**These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.**

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### BLACK COUNTRY

**The Nakba to the Great March of Return—how can Palestine be free?**

Wed 15 May, 7.30pm, Wild Bytes Cafe, Darlington St, Wolverhampton, WV1 4HW

#### BRADFORD

**System change not climate change**

Wed 29 May, 7pm, Glyde House, Little Horton Ln (opposite the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

#### BRISTOL

**Murdered by the state—Blair Peach, socialist and anti-racist**

Wed 1 May, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

#### CAMBRIDGE

**System change not climate change**

Thu 2 May, 7.30pm, River Lane Centre, River Ln, CB5 8HP

#### HUDDERSFIELD

**A Marxist history of the Labour Party**

Wed 22 May, 6.30pm, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations), HD1 5JP

#### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

**The Stephen Lawrence Report 20 years on—why does institutional racism still exist?**

Thu 2 May, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Sq, LS3 1AD

#### LONDON: NORTH

**Sudan, Algeria, Palestine—the return of revolution?**

Wed 1 May, 7.45pm, West Indian Cultural Centre, Haringey, N8 0DD

#### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

**Why we need a revolution**

Wed 1 May, 7.30pm, Weavers Community Forum, 10 Shacklewell St, E2 7EG

#### NORWICH

**How can we build a sustainable future?**

Wed 15 May, 7.30pm, Vauxhall Centre, Johnson Pl, NR2 2SA

#### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

**System change not climate change**

Thu 9 May, 7pm, Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre), S1 2JB

#### SOUTHAMPTON

**A Marxist history of the Labour Party**

Wed 8 May, 7.30pm, October Books, 189 Portswood Rd, SO17 2NF

#### YORK

**Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists**

Wed 1 May, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Lower Friargate, YO1 9RL

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

#### BARNESLEY

**30 years since Hillsborough—police, cover-ups and justice**

Thu 2 May, 6.30pm, Room 302, The Civic, Hanson St, S70 2HZ

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

### SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

# Sudan and Algeria—resistance, revolt and revolution



Women protesting in Sudan

#### ABERDEEN

Mon 29 Apr, 6pm, The Snug, Ma Cameron's, 6-8 Little Belmont St, AB10 1JG

#### BIRMINGHAM

Wed 1 May, 7pm, The Adam & Eve, 201 Bradford St, B12 0JD

#### EXETER

Wed 8 May, 7pm, The Exeter peace shop, 31 New Bridge St, EX4 3AH

#### OXFORD

Wed 1 May, 7.30pm, Restore Building, Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

#### SWANSEA

Thu 2 May, 7.30pm, Brynmill Community Centre, St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

## BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



### The Labour Party—a Marxist history

by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein and Charlie Kimber



### Blair Peach—socialist and anti-racist

by Nick Grant and Brian Richardson

1 Bloomsbury Street,  
London WC1B 3QE  
020 7637 1848  
[bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)

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# Loro—uncomfortable view of Berlusconi's seedy world

A movie about former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi can be hard to watch—but it exposes a horrible and vulgar system, writes **Simon Basketter**

**PAOLO SORRENTINO'S** visceral, grotesque and vulgar portrait of a former Italian prime minister, *Loro* (Them), is almost a great film. Almost.

It is the story of Silvio Berlusconi—infamous media mogul and right wing politician.

Sorrentino follows in many ways from the Italian director Fellini. Fellini's lifelong mission was to critique excess by force-feeding it to his audience until they got sick.

Loro attacks affluence by wallowing in it.

We pick up the Berlusconi saga in the closing days of his second marriage, after the fall of his third government, when he was embroiled in various criminal trials.

But first the film takes a trip through the political hangers-on, women who work as prostitutes and the handlers who orbit him, yearning to be of service to power.

He fills the frame with sex, drugs, and europop. The camera glides through orgies, making the viewer a voyeur.

Toni Servillo brilliantly portrays Berlusconi with a slick of dyed-black hair, cheesy smile and jowly menace.

He distracts from his own misdeeds with a constant stream of jokes, made-up quotations, and expanding lies.

## Malevolence

The poisonous charm and wily self-justification mean malevolence is rendered as being part of his act.

He keeps a collection of favoured women identifiable by the butterfly pendant necklaces he gifts them like dog tags.

It is a sweeping vision of hell—trashy vulgarity and endemic corruption. The film is sprawling and idiosyncratic.

The symbolism isn't subtle—a sheep dies in Berlusconi's house transfixed by the air conditioning, a rubbish truck crashes and explodes,



**TONI SERVILLO** (above) as Berlusconi in *Loro*, which uncovers a grim world of sexism and banality

spewing out garbage. The pervasive use of female nudity leaves a nasty aftertaste—as it is meant to do—but it is still problematic.

Berlusconi regales women with his jokes. They laugh as they should. Eventually dinner drifts to dancing. Silvio watches.

When he doesn't the boredom and pain is clear in their eyes.

The women are led to believe that marketing their sexuality is the best way up the ladder to money and careers.

They are presented as emblematic of Italy's self-abasement and its decline into unrestrained greed, apathy and hedonism.

## Agency

But that means that they lack agency in the film, or in many cases even discernible characters.

There are powerful women characters. Elena Sofia Ricci plays his outraged wife. She shows there are some people her husband can't sell smoke to.

Another young woman tells Berlusconi frankly that she doesn't want sex, nor for him to make her an actress or a congresswoman, and that his breath reminds her of her grandfather's.

Sorrentino said, "This film is about a triumph of vulgarity. I don't



think it should be my job to say, 'Look how ugly vulgarity is, and how ugly these vulgar people are.'

"This ambiguity can be unpleasant and uncomfortable, and doing it this way gets fewer positive responses from viewers, but it's necessary to show the beauty of vulgarity. It is beautiful.

"Why else would it be so popular? I am more interested in interrogating what is so attractive about a life we can also find repulsive."

As Berlusconi persuades six senators to jump ship to his party so he

can get back into government he says, "In love, you betray. In politics, you change your mind."

A socialist recounts a history of Berlusconi's crimes then takes the bribe.

It is an uncomfortable film. Evil is banal. You want to stop watching Berlusconi. But having created him, he won't simply go away.

It is a critique of us, the complicit viewers. Sorrentino thinks Berlusconi is the monster we deserve.

*Loro* is in cinemas now

## FILM

### STYX

Directed by Wolfgang Fischer. In cinemas from Friday

STYX CENTRES around a woman on a solo sailing journey from Gibraltar to Ascension Island who comes across African refugees in a sinking fishing vessel.

This film starts very slowly and a lot of time is used showing lingering shots of the ocean and the protagonist reading books.

You find out she is a doctor who owns a sailing boat and lives in Gibraltar.

Aside from that she remains mysterious.

### Important

She speaks little and has only one significant connection with anyone else in the film.

This is important as it makes it clear she isn't a hero or particularly special.

This is part of the strength of the film.

Styx could have very easily become a heart-warming film about finding commonality and humanity between two people with vastly different backgrounds.

But it remains unsentimental when the doctor saves a young



A scene from Styx

refugee boy who jumps from the fishing boat.

Nothing distracts from the horror of the sinking ship and refugees drowning.

The film shows a brutal system of enforced border controls that means refugee deaths are a near-daily occurrence. It also shows the racism that infects all parts of our world.

Coastguards are slow to act. A freight ship tells the doctor that it's company policy not to save refugees.

The doctor, a white, well-off German woman, is told to stay away from the ship as it will be "dangerous".

All of this contributes to the feeling that, in this world, refugees' lives do not matter.

**Sophie Squier**

**T**HE WAR of Independence in Algeria began on 1 November 1954, but the atrocity that sparked it took place nine years earlier.

Over four days European colonists and the French army massacred as many as 40,000 Algerians in the town of Setif.

For millions of Algerians colonialism meant poverty, vicious repression and brutal killings while the colonists enjoyed their privileged positions.

The resistance by the Algerians was wholly justified.

As the revolutionary Frantz Fanon put it, "The policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action, advise the native by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge."

"It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force."

The National Liberation Front (FLN), the main nationalist party, struck the opening blow in the war for liberation on 1 November.

A handful of rebels in the east of the country attacked French outposts.

In 1955 the FLN made a turn towards a "total war" strategy. This was a decisive point in the drive for independence.

It meant anyone or anything to do with France was a target—from rich colonists to Algerians who had beneficial relationships with the French.

## Killed

To mark the turn, attacks were planned on 20 August. FLN members went to 26 localities around the eastern end of the coast and encouraged people to rise up—123 Europeans were killed.

In reprisals 1,273 Algerians were killed by French troops and rampaging colonists.

This set the tone for the rest of the war. Some 150,000 Algerians would be killed by its end in 1962.

France had "granted" neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco their independence in 1956.

But Algeria was officially part of the French Republic, not a colony, so any suggestion of independence was seen as a greater threat to the state.

Prime minister Guy Mollet, of the French Labour-type SFIO party, signed off "special powers" in 1956 that allowed him to send conscripts to Algeria.

This meant that the number of French troops in Algeria shot up from 180,000 to 500,000, despite a widespread revolt among soldiers in France against being sent.

The FLN had 20,000 troops in 1956 and far fewer weapons than the French.

Disgracefully, the French



FIGHTING AGAINST French colonial authorities and collaborators in the capital Algiers during the war for independence

# ALGERIA'S FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

Algerians had to fight a brutal war for independence. But the struggle for freedom didn't end when the nationalists kicked out the French in 1962, writes Alistair Farrow



Communist Party supported Mollet, arguing for "the existence and permanence of political, economic, and cultural bonds between France and Algeria".

This meant that the number of French troops in Algeria shot up from 180,000 to 500,000, despite a widespread revolt among soldiers in France against being sent.

The FLN had 20,000 troops in 1956 and far fewer weapons than the French.

Disgracefully, the French

**“The French army did not anticipate the scale of the resistance”**

Ramdane Abane, said, "One corpse in a jacket is always worth more than 20 in uniform."

Abane also pushed for the politicisation of the conflict.

He launched a newspaper and began to use transistor radios to spread propaganda.

There were competing visions of how to develop Algeria.

The contradiction would remain unresolved—until it

came undone for the FLN in the 1980s and 1990s.

Strategy was contested within the nationalist movement. Abane was at odds with figures such as Ahmed Ben Bella, who wanted to focus on the peasantry and a guerrilla war in the outlying regions. Abane's focus was the central region nearer the coast.

His strategy brought the war to the capital, Algiers. One square kilometre of the city was home to around 100,000 Algerians. It was turned into a fortress of secret tunnels and bomb workshops.

The French guillotined two FLN fighters in Algiers on 19 June 1956. In retaliation 49 Europeans were shot dead on the streets of Algiers over four days.

Colonist violence exploded. The new governor, Robert Lacoste, called in paratroopers and handed their general Jacques Massu control of public order in the city. This was a fateful move. It meant a founding principle of the French Fourth Republic—civilian political rule—had been undermined.

Massu used extreme violence to put down an eight-day general strike called by the FLN.

In 1958 tensions between the French army in Algeria and the French state boiled over.

The army seized the government building in the capital, fearing that politicians were preparing to give Algeria more autonomy.

**T**O STAVE off the army move, right wing politician and former general Charles De Gaulle was given power by the president.

He was under increasing pressure from events within Algeria, including a four-day general strike in 1960 organised by the newly-formed UGTA, a union federation with deep links to the FLN.

De Gaulle began negotiating with the FLN to organise French withdrawal in 1961.

The FLN's campaign had unleashed over a century of visceral anger at brutal colonial rule and made Algeria ungovernable. The war had become a financial drain and increasingly unpopular in France.

In March 1962 the Evian Accords between France and the FLN brought the war to an end. Algerians finally celebrated independence on 5 July 1962, but with liberation came a new set of problems.

In the turmoil of French withdrawal, a new layer of Algerian capitalists began hoovering up land and riches. And money still poured to France.

Ben Bella became the first president of Algeria. For him "the popular, democratic revolution is first of all an agrarian

revolution." But Bella's limited reforms, which excluded women from literacy programmes and broke up trade union organisation, were too much for sections of the FLN.

Some looked more to industrial development and didn't want to alienate landowners and bosses. And Bella's moves to centralise more power at the army's expense threatened the generals.

Boumedienne, one of the strongest generals, seized power in a coup in 1965.

His regime benefited from runaway oil prices, but trouble came for the FLN when the oil boom ground to a halt in 1985.

Algeria's foreign currency earnings fell by 40 percent. Foreign imports were slashed, leading to food shortages.

Unemployment stood at 50 percent for 20 to 24 year-olds. Protests and riots spread following strikes in the Algiers area.

**T**HE FLN had encouraged moderate Islamist forces to attack the left. The nationalists had always guarded against the left because it saw it as a threat to the development of capitalism in Algeria.

Now the Islamists were articulating people's anger at a quarter of a century of military dictatorship.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won 55 percent of the vote in local elections in 1990.

But it was caught between its mass support base of the urban working class and its wealthy financial backers.

Although it rode a huge wave of popular anger to office in the localities, the FIS put down strikes in its areas to appease the bosses.

The FLN were forced to organise Algeria's first multiparty election in 1991, but still tried gerrymandering to stop the Islamists from winning.

Despite this, in the first round of elections in December 1991, the FIS won 188 seats. The FLN came third with 15 seats.

The FLN promptly moved to outlaw the FIS, which then rose up against these blatantly undemocratic measures.

It took control of central Algiers, which led to a brutal crackdown by the state.

The country descended into a decade of civil war which saw as many as 200,000 people killed. State forces killed



indiscriminately. One member of the Algerian Association of the Disappeared described how "the military and police would come together. They'd circle a village looking for so-called 'terrorists'."

"If they couldn't find who they were looking for, they'd take other family members," they said.

The civil war ended in a ceasefire and the FLN back in charge.

The mass movement in Algeria today comes from deep anger at decades of anti-democratic rule by leaders who claim legitimacy as Algeria's liberators.

But the society they ushered in after independence was still designed around the needs of the rich. The current protest movement has the potential to change all that.

**Richard Greeman**, a Marxist writer and activist best known for his work on Victor Serge, reports from France

THE MASSIVE, self-organised social movement known as the Yellow Vests held its second nationwide "Assembly of Assemblies" earlier this month.

Hundreds of activist groups from all over France each chose two delegates—one woman, one man—to gather in the port city of St Nazaire.

Local Yellow Vests hosted 700 delegates at the St Nazaire "House of the People."

A sign on the wall proclaimed, "No one has the solution, but everybody has a piece of it."

Their project—mobilise their "collective intelligence" to reorganise, strategise, and prolong their struggle.

Their aim—achieve the immediate goals of liveable wages and retirements, restoration of social benefits and public services.

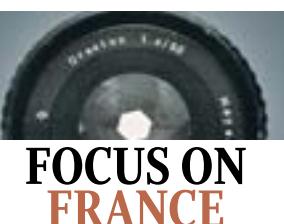
Tax the rich and end fiscal fraud to pay for preserving the environment.

And, most ambitious of all, reinvent democracy in the process.

Their declaration ends with the phrase, "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Particular attention was paid to the issue of the environment. The assembly called on people to "take up a conflictual stance against the present system in order to create, together, a new ecological, popular social movement".

Brilliant! Who said an unstructured autonomous movement of ordinary, not well-educated people, could not come up with strategies and tactics?



## FOCUS ON FRANCE

# The Yellow Vest struggle to reinvent democracy



## BACK STORY

### The Yellow Vest movement began last November

- It began in response to fuel price rises, but is now a much bigger movement

- Demands include higher wages, better public services and taxing the rich

- Protests have taken place for 22 successive Saturdays

- Earlier this month an "Assembly of Assemblies" discussed new tactics

- The Yellow Vests are defying harsh repression

seeing them as bourgeois on bicycles unwilling to struggle directly against the establishment.

Instinctively, the Yellow Vests seem to have assimilated the profound criticism of representative democracy that goes back to the 18th century and was applied during the 1871 Paris Commune.

There delegates were given limited mandates, subject to instant recall, regularly rotated, and paid at workers' wages.

The Communards also called on other cities to rise and link up as a federation.

This is the Yellow Vests' modus operandi.

The Assembly of Assemblies discussed varying our tactics better for the movement to last.

Among new tactics was a call for a huge nationwide protest against the increasing repression of the Macron government and the liberation of all those in jail.

For a longer version go to [bit.ly/Yellowdemocracy](http://bit.ly/Yellowdemocracy)

## Uprising

This shows growth from the original Yellow Vest uprising, which began as a protest against a hike in taxes on diesel fuel imposed in the name of "saving the environment."

Since then, the Yellow Vests have tentatively converged with environmental groups.

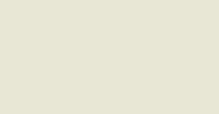
Many poor and working class Yellow Vests can't help



Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop.

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Film available as a DVD and on other platforms

## Yellow Vests

tentatively converged with environmental groups

# Richard Burdon is right to criticise Zionism

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR'S shadow justice secretary Richard Burdon has faced calls to resign for describing Zionism—the ideology that is used to justify Palestinian oppression—as "the enemy of peace".

Burdon was addressing a public meeting in 2014—the year Israel launched a brutal war on Palestinians in Gaza.

He said, "The enemy of the Palestinian people is not the Jewish people. The enemy of the Palestinian people are Zionists, and Zionism is the enemy of peace."

The comments, made before Burdon was an MP, clearly targeted Zionism as a political ideology. Yet his comments have been linked to antisemitism.

## Definition

It comes after the Labour Party last year adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, which restricts criticism of Israel.

The definition was adopted with an example that says

**National demonstration for Palestine**  
Saturday 11 May, Portland Place, central London, 12 noon.  
Called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign

it could be antisemitic to call Israel a "racist endeavour". Mike Katz is chair of the Jewish Labour Movement, which says its aim is to "promote the centrality of Israel in Jewish life".

Katz accused Burdon of "making dog-whistle attacks on British Jews and their right, through Zionism, for national self-determination".

And former Labour MP Ian Austin said, "Zionism is simply the belief in a homeland and self-determination for the Jewish people."

But Burdon was right to describe Zionism as an "enemy of peace".

Zionism isn't simply the idea that Jewish people have the right to self-determination or their own state. Neither is



WORKING TOGETHER 20  
LABOUR'S RICHARD Burdon has faced attacks over his criticism of Israel

it an intrinsic aspect of Jewishness—many Jews are anti-Zionist.

Zionism began as a colonialist idea that said Jews fleeing persecution had to occupy Palestinian land to establish a state.

Zionist settlers drove out Palestinians to ensure the state had a Jewish majority.

Israel's first prime minister David Ben Gurion said that "only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state".

Between 1947 and 1948, some 850,000 Arabs were ethnically cleansed from the land.

Today Zionism informs the belief held by all mainstream Israeli political parties that Palestinian refugees must not be

allowed to return home. They say that this would threaten Israel's existence. Behind this is the racist idea that Jews and Arabs must be kept separate.

Yet rather than defend his comments, Burdon has backed down.

## Regretted

He said he regretted using the term which "has different meanings to different people". It strengthened calls for his resignation.

Leading Labour left figures have given ground to the idea that anti-Zionism is antisemitic.

They say supporters of Palestinians should focus on the current Israeli government—not Zionism or the state itself.

This restricts the ability of Palestinians to define and explain their oppression.

It means they can't describe their expulsion as ethnic cleansing central to the creation of a racist state.

Supporters of Israel want to shut down criticism of Zionism.

The best response is to defend the right to oppose Israel—and to be anti-Zionist.

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# School's out in Poland as 600,000 join strikes

Biggest all-out walkout in over 25 years as education workers take action, reports Andy Zebrowski

**AN ALL-OUT** education strike in Poland is deepening as workers develop new forms of organisation to run the action.

Unions estimate that over 600,000 workers are taking part—not just teachers, but cooks, cleaners, caretakers and office staff as well. It's the biggest education strike since 1993 and it began earlier this month.

The most important development was the formation of the Warsaw Interschool Strike Committee (MKS) last Tuesday.

It now has over 90 schools represented.

One of those present said, "The crowd was so dense that it was difficult to pass. Revolutionary atmosphere."

The Warsaw MKS declared that teachers would boycott the matriculation exams, which are similar to A-Levels. It urged strikers and their supporters to demonstrate in front of the Ministry of Education last Wednesday.

Similar committees have been set up in Lodz, Krakow and Wroclaw.

Strikers from one of the Warsaw boroughs had already planned a small demonstration. Thousands came. People who had been worried were now confident and smiling.

The strike includes nurseries as well as schools. The vast majority of strikers are women. Strikers are demanding a pay rise, but they are angry about many other things too.

## Frustration

Magdalena Kierpiec is a primary school teacher on strike in Czestochowa in southern Poland. She told Socialist Worker, "The main reason for the strike is frustration, never-ending teachers' duties and the fight for education.

"Despite differences of opinion, we stick together and are very motivated to strike. In my town, Czestochowa, all 'We've had enough'

## BACK STORY

### Teachers and other education workers are striking over pay

- Leaders of the famous Solidarity union are trying to undermine the strike
- Members of Solidarity are joining others not in unions to walk out
- Now education workers have to keep the pressure on to win their demands

schools are on strike." One secondary school teacher from Radom told Socialist Worker, "The strike is in defence of the quality of teaching. In the past two years this has sharply deteriorated due to hurriedly introduced reform.

### Recruitment

"In newly-created eight year primary schools, three years of high school were condensed into two years.

"It will double the number of children during this year's recruitment to secondary school."

The main union involved in the strike is the Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) with over 200,000 members.

The second biggest teaching union is Solidarity, which still has the world-famous logo from the time of the ten-million strong workers' rebellion against the Stalinist regime in 1980-81.

Scandalously, Solidarity leaders are now acting as strike-breakers.

The Radom teacher said, "Teachers feel betrayed by the heirs of the legendary Solidarity union. It has stopped fighting for workers' rights and begun working on behalf of the government."

But they added, "Despite the government's manipulation of the media, protesters meet with numerous manifestations of sympathy and understanding on the part of parents and students."



TEACHERS PROTESTED outside the Polish education ministry last Wednesday

PICTURE: ANDY ZEBROWSKI

## Teachers are rebelling after the Solidarity union leaders retreat

INITIALLY UNIONS were demanding a 1,000 zloty a month wage rise—about £200. But union leaders cut their demands in a misguided attempt to show they are being "reasonable". Many teachers disagreed with that.

The Solidarity union teachers' leader, Ryszard Proksa, signed a deal with the government on the eve of the strike for a lot less—roughly half—of what strikers are asking for. He even threatened union members who joined the strike with expulsion.

For historical reasons, Solidarity leaders have a very close relationship with Poland's hard right Law and Justice (PiS) government. Proksa is a councillor.

But the overwhelming majority of Solidarity teachers are striking. Some regions of the union are demanding Proksa's resignation. Teachers are crossing out the Solidarity logo on strike badges. Some are even leaving the union.

The authorities have made it very difficult to organise a legal strike. Each of the thousands of schools had to individually start a collective dispute at the local level.

This was meant to atomise teachers. But the demand for

action among them was so high that this backfired. School strike committees were set up and there was close cooperation among rank and file teachers—not only between the various union members, but also with those who were not in any union.

So now hundreds of thousands of non-union teachers and school workers are striking as well. A special strike fund has been set up to cover those such as Solidarity members and non-unionists.

### Entered

The government is desperate to beat the teachers. Police have entered some schools asking questions. In order to make sure that middle school exams took place the government brought in unqualified people to supervise them.

The government is right to be worried. Workers are deeply angry that they are not seeing the benefits of Poland's relatively high economic growth in recent years.

Teacher Magdalena said the government had made an "avalanche of promises" during parliamentary elections.

"We were told that things are

going great and we will have money for everything," she said. "But we felt completely differently. Despite government promises that nobody will lose work, many teachers lost their jobs."

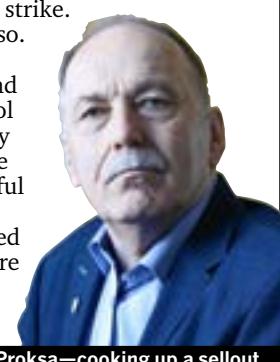
Last week the ZNP union leadership met and vowed to continue the strike.

ZNP member and striking Warsaw teacher Agnieszka Kaleta said, "Everyone was very pleased with the decision. We can win—the strikers are solid. In my school all of us come in and we discuss the organisation of the strike every day."

The strikers may inspire other workers to strike. Let's hope so.

The teachers and other school and nursery workers are in a powerful position.

They need to make sure that their leaders do not retreat.



Proksa—cooking up a sellout

## IN BRIEF

### Strikes could test Scottish exam body

WORKERS AT Scotland's national qualifications' body are balloting for strikes.

This could lead to widespread disruption with staff refusing to process students' exam marks.

Alison MacLean, Unite union regional industrial officer, said a restructure of the Scottish Qualifications Agency had been "shambolic and chaotic".

"Unite has many members who have either been displaced, had to apply for new roles or not been matched to suitable roles," she added.

### Social workers get ready for resistance

SOCIAL WORK staff in West Dunbartonshire near Glasgow have voted for strikes saying unsafe practices and unacceptable workloads are putting people at risk.

The Unison union said a consultative ballot among Children and Families social work staff resulted in a 92 percent vote for strikes on an 88 percent turnout.

The union says there will be a formal strike ballot unless the council changes course.

### Deliveroo bulletin is ready to collect

DELIVEROO WORKERS have launched a monthly bulletin to discuss the way forward for their fight for better pay working conditions.

It features articles on how to get involved in strikes, as well as formulating lists of local and national demands.

Read the bulletin at [bit.ly/Puncture1](https://bit.ly/Puncture1)

### Meltdown postponed at Sellafield plant

A PLANNED strike at the Sellafield nuclear facility has been delayed by the Unite union for talks.

Around 180 workers were due to start a ten-day walkout from 19 April but the action was postponed to 24 April.

Security guards, cleaners, catering, vending, laundry and environmental operatives voted 98 percent for strikes on a 70 percent turnout.

Workers rejected outsourcer Mitie's pay offer of just £8.45 an hour and a further ten-day strike is planned from 4 May.

### Couriers demand equal treatment

COURIERS FOR The Doctors Laboratory (TDL) medical delivery service are balloting for strikes.

The demands include equal pay and conditions with other TDL employees and bonus rates for unsociable hours, overtime, weekends and bank holidays.

The workers are part of the IWGB trade union.

## NHS OUTSOURCING



ON THE picket line at Southampton General Hospital

PICTURE: UNITE SOUTH EAST REGION

# NHS strikes demand justice from Sodexo

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

CATERING WORKERS at two hospital in South Yorkshire are taking the fight to outsourcing giant Sodexo.

The 70 Unison and GMB union members at Doncaster Royal Infirmary and Bassettlaw Hospital plan to walk out for three days from Friday of next week. They are demanding the same rate of pay as workers directly employed by the NHS.

One Unison member said, "We feel we have no choice but to take this action—we can't afford not to."

Stacey Booth, the GMB regional organiser, slammed bosses for paying poverty wages. "For Sodexo to play the pauper card is a joke. They made £65 million last year and one of their directors took home the thick end of a million quid."

Unison members plan further strikes on 7-9 May, 15-17 May and 20-22 May.

This follows recent victories by Unison members at Liverpool Women's Hospital and the Royal Bolton Hospital.

They were also fighting for the same rate of pay as workers directly employed by the NHS.

Their victories showed that calling strikes longer than one day can get quick results.

Trade unionists should build solidarity for the workers at Doncaster and Bassettlaw and join their picket lines.

**OUTSOURCED** security staff at Southampton General Hospital struck over health and safety concerns on Friday of last week.

The walkout was part of a programme of industrial action by the 21 Unite union members against outsourcing giant Mitie. It followed a 24-hour strike last month to demand better personal protective equipment.

One Unite member said, "We've had a massive increase in violent incidents and that's purely because austerity is having an impact."

Workers plan to escalate to a 48-hour walkout beginning on 3 May and a 72-hour one beginning on 7 June.

**OVER 30** catering workers and supporters joined a rally outside Barnsley Hospital on Wednesday of last week.

They are employed by contractor ISS, which has decided to change their pay arrangements. Staff have been paid weekly but have now been told that this will be changed to fortnightly.

This will mean a gap in payments.

Many of these workers are on minimum wage and are desperate about how they will manage bills.

**George Arthur**

## UNISON UNION ELECTIONS

### Back candidates who want an active union

UNISON UNION members are voting for seats on the national executive with the ballot closing on 17 May.

Some left members are fighting for election under the "Vote for action—vote for change" manifesto.

It says, "We believe that our union needs to change—to be more democratic, member-led, active, and a fighting union."

The elections come after a year of key battles, particularly by low-paid women.

In October women workers in Glasgow staged a dramatic 48-hour strike as part of their battle for equal pay.

Merseyside care workers at Alternative Futures Group

have announced further strikes to fight for the national minimum wage.

And women in the home enablement service in Birmingham have taken over 60 days of strikes against years of attacks on their jobs.

In London, traffic wardens in Camden have staged 27 days of action fighting for decent pay.

#### Organise

Camden Unison branch secretary Liz Wheatley is running for the Greater London regional seat for the NEC and said these workers "show how we can organise to fight back".

"I am proud to be standing alongside them

on the picket lines and protests," she said.

"Austerity is not caused by migrants—there's plenty of money to go around but it's lining the pockets of those at the top of society" she said.

Sandy Nicoll is Soas University branch secretary and is currently engaged in the fight against job cuts.

He argues for a union that "fights to improve our members' lives while defending the vital services we provide."

Socialist Worker supports candidates campaigning under the "Vote for action—vote for change" banner.

For a full list of candidates campaigning for change go to [unisonnlections.weebly.com](http://unisonnlections.weebly.com)

## EDUCATION

### NEU delegates back fight

THE NEU union ended its first annual conference in Liverpool last week.

In the first days of conference, delegates backed motions to ballot for a boycott of the hated Sats tests and for more action on pay.

They also passed a series of motions calling for continued campaigning against baseline testing and for the abolition of the Ofsted schools inspectorate.

Joint NEU general secretary Kevin Courtney said the move showed workers feel "our system of assessment and accountability is not fit for purpose".

He said testing "dominates schools, imposing a culture of fear, overwork and compliance".

NEU delegates also instructed the union to "work closely with the Labour leadership to see that Labour abolishes all the Conservative anti-union laws".

Motions supporting equality campaigns were passed including a motion instructing the union to affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The motion noted the "maltreatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military

court system" and the "illegal occupation of the West Bank and siege of Gaza".

Delegates backed Labour's proposal for a National Education Service. And they instructed the union leaders to support action including strikes to defend workers.

Delegates called for more money for Special Educational Needs provision.

**WORKERS IN** the NEU union at the John Roan school in south east London plan to strike for the 13th time on Tuesday 14 May.

The action is part of a long-running campaign to stop the school being turned into an academy.

GMB union members at the school have also struck against the plan, and parents are campaigning against it. Earlier this month, the Schools Week website reported that the government has revoked 33 academy orders.

Strikers plan to lobby the Department for Education at midday on the day of the strike.

Go to John Roan Strike picket line: Revoke The Academy Order! on Facebook. Send messages of support to [greenwichnut@outlook.com](mailto:greenwichnut@outlook.com)

## UCU



Jo McNeill (third from left) at a Lambeth College picket line

PICTURE: GUY SHALMAN

### Jo McNeill for UCU gen sec

VOTING IN the UCU union general secretary election was set to begin on Monday of next week.

The UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, is backing Jo McNeill.

Jo stood against the previous general secretary Sally Hunt in 2017 and won 41 percent of the vote.

In her election address Jo said she is a "lifelong activist" who has led campaigns to save jobs and win better conditions for workers.

She added that she is "actively anti-racist".

Jo is president of Liverpool university UCU branch. It was the first branch to reject a shoddy offer that the union leadership backed to end a universities pensions dispute last year.

Jo released a manifesto for further and adult

education earlier this month.

It points out that 40 percent of the adult education budget has been slashed since 2010.

The manifesto calls for a fight against neoliberalism in education, and for the defence of a broader curriculum in colleges.

It also calls for all fees to be scrapped, for the restoration of the Education Maintenance Allowance and for the abolition of Ofsted.

Jo calls for fixed-term and hourly-paid contracts to be scrapped, and for refugees to have the right to free education.

Activists in colleges and universities should organise election hustings and invite Jo to speak.

The ballot ends on Thursday 23 May.

For more information and election materials go to [jomcneill4gensec.com](http://jomcneill4gensec.com)

## CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

# Cleaners walk out to sweep away low pay

**CLEANERS AT** the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have called strikes against subcontractor Interserve.

Bosses at the outsourcer have refused to negotiate with the workers' PCS union over redundancies, contractual changes to pay dates, and attacks on holiday pay and sick pay. Strikes are set for 1 and 2 May.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said, "Staff have told us that changes to their pay dates have left them out of pocket and struggling to make ends meet."

"The whole debacle shows that Interserve should never have been awarded the contract at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

"Ministers cannot escape their responsibility and they should have learned from the disaster at Carillion that contracting out doesn't make sense financially."

He added, "All these jobs at the FCO and elsewhere must be safeguarded and brought back in-house as soon as possible."

**ACTIVISTS IN** the PCS union were pushing to get the biggest possible turnout in a ballot for strikes over pay.

The ballot closes on Monday of next week. Tory anti-union laws require



PICTURE: GUY SMALMAN

PCS UNION members in London on strike last week

a 50 percent turnout in ballots.

It's possible to reach that. The union announced last week that more than 50 percent of its members in Scotland have said they have voted. And across Britain 56 union branches have reached the threshold,

according to data collected by the union's branch app, phone bank and email responses.

There can be no complacency. Every vote matters.

**ELECTIONS FOR** the PCS union assistant general secretary and the national

executive are a chance to vote for a fighting strategy.

Socialist Worker calls for a vote for Lynn Henderson for assistant general secretary.

Lynn supports national action over pay and pensions. She also wants more participation in the union and to "get the Tories out of government and to organise to win".

Lynn adds, "Unity is strength—the union's leadership must work together.

"I am proud to have the confidence and backing of Mark Serwotka."

Vote Lynn Henderson and the Democracy Alliance candidates for the national executive.

The elections run until 9 May.

For further information go to [Vote Lynn Henderson for AGS](#) on Facebook

**PCS** union members working for the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency are voting on strikes in a long running dispute over changes to their terms and conditions.

The ballot centres on management's refusal to consult meaningfully over imposed working practices and restructures that are hitting terms and conditions.

It runs until 10 May.

## STAND UP TO RACISM

## Anti-racists organise to show solidarity with migrants in need of healthcare

OVER 30 people came to a "migration is not a crime—end the hostile environment" meeting on Saturday of last week.

It was organised by Oxford Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and the Oxford Windrush Group at Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

Speakers identified immigration laws as a key problem that needed to be challenged.

There was a discussion on the growth of racism and ways to fight it.

And people also talked about the role that racism plays in dividing ordinary people to stop them fighting back against poverty and cuts in jobs and public services. Part of the



Part of the panel at the anti-racist meeting in Oxford

discussion looked at the potential to work with NHS workers to secure access to healthcare for people who can't produce immigration documents.

**Thanks to Julie Simmons**

**Around 40 people** protested against Nigel Farage in Nottingham on

Friday of last week. The protest was called by SUTR at two days' notice outside the East Midlands launch of the right wing Brexit Party.

SUTR is calling on Remain and Leave supporters to unite against racism in the European elections.

**Thanks to Richard Buckwell**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Two groups of workers could strike in Newham

A SECOND group of workers at Newham Council in east London are set to start voting on strikes.

Around 75 Unite union members in the housing repairs unit are being balloted on whether to take action on a "myriad of issues".

They include pay cuts of up to 20 percent.

The ballot of carpenters, electricians and plumbers is set to close on 22 May.

Around 45 bin workers, also Unite members, may strike over the council's failure to implement a grading structure.

It is estimated that workers have lost up to £20,000 over 12 years as a result of this.

## TRANSPORT

## Fight over pay takes flight at Luton and Heathrow

UNITE UNION members at Heathrow and Luton Airports are getting ready for strikes that could cause huge disruption to travel.

Over 300 baggage handlers at Heathrow in west London were set to start a four-day walkout from Friday of this week.

They are fighting a six-year pay freeze and want the London Living Wage of £10.55 an hour.

Meanwhile, workers at Luton are preparing for a week-long walkout against low pay from Friday of this week.

Bosses at GH London made an improved offer after a strike last month, but have now reneged on it.

Kevin Hall, Unite regional officer for Heathrow, said, "The overwhelming vote for strikes is proof that workers are fed up with year on year pay freezes. There is a lot of

anger with more and more workers joining Unite to demand an end to this pay injustice."

**WORKERS AT** Lothian buses in Edinburgh are preparing to strike over a "catalogue of issues".

Unite union members voted by 94 percent for industrial action in a consultative ballot after talks broke down.

Bosses have taken away union reps' facility time, which allows them to do union activity during working hours without loss of pay.

Unite regional industrial officer Lyn Turner said, "It's disappointing that it has come to this.

"But the ballot result clearly shows that our members are prepared to do whatever it takes to get Lothian buses to understand the strength and depth of feeling."

## SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE



An independence march in Edinburgh last year PICTURE: ANDREW McGOWAN

## March to demand second independence referendum

is the significant numbers of people who are coming from near and far.

"They are coming not just from Glasgow and all over Scotland, the rest of Britain and Europe, but from Canada, the USA and even Australia and New Zealand."

Organisers All Under One Banner (AUOB) said, "If we want independence then we have to be defiant and rock the boat.

"And there's no better way

than mass demonstrations, ruffling the feathers of the status quo in a powerfully positive and peaceful way."

Scottish National Party (SNP)-run Glasgow City Council has tried to put restrictions on the march, including a change to its start time.

Manny Singh from AUOB said, "The Orange Order and other groups get to march when they want so why can't we?

"We have stated from the beginning that our start time is 1.30pm prompt.

"The reason for that time

This includes accepting that Scotland would continue with the British pound for a long period, severely restricting its ability to set an independent economic policy.

But, in a sign of the pressure, SNP depute leader Keith Brown has agreed to speak on Saturday of next week. Previously SNP leaders have tended to spurn AUOB events.

March for independence, Saturday 4 May, assemble 12.30pm for 1.30pm departure, Kelvingrove Park to Glasgow Green

# TORIES SAY MAY HAS GOT TO GO

**THERESA MAY** was facing a growing revolt as Brexit talks with Labour resumed on Tuesday.

Sections of her party spent the Easter bank holiday hatching plots to force her out as prime minister.

Nigel Evans, joint executive secretary of the backbenchers' 1922 Committee, called on May to go in a "matter of days" on Tuesday.

His intervention came ahead of a meeting of the committee, which runs party leadership elections.

"She should go as quickly as possible and if she refuses to do so, we should look to change rules or have an indicative vote," he said.

## Emergency

Over 70 local Tory party bosses called for a vote of no confidence in May.

The National Conservative Convention, made up of 800 of the party's highest-ranking officials, has to call an emergency general meeting to discuss this within the next few weeks.

The vote won't be binding, but it could show the scale of opposition to May across the party.

One comment, leaked from



TORIES ACROSS the party are calling for Theresa May to go

PICTURE: NUMBER 10/Flickr

a forum of local party bosses, said, "We must do whatever it takes to get rid of her."

The right hope to gain from the Tories' crisis in European elections on 23 May. Nigel

Farage's Brexit Party has held launch rallies across Britain and rides at around 14 percent in the polls.

It's led by former Tory and Ukip figures. A Survation

poll last week found that 40 percent of Tory councillors were planning to vote for Farage's party.

Farage wants to paint himself as a democrat who

represents all Leave voters against an out-of-touch establishment. Labour becoming the party of Remain would be a gift to Farage.

Labour Party deputy leader

Tom Watson last weekend piled pressure onto Jeremy Corbyn to back a second referendum on Brexit.

He claimed it was the only way to beat Farage and the Brexit Party.

Corbyn could have sought to unite Leave and Remain around a socialist, anti-racist vision of Brexit.

## Fudged

But he fudged Brexit for the sake of party unity and arrived at a right wing vision.

The leadership policy is to dump EU migrants' freedom of movement—while keeping many of the single market's rules that restrict public ownership.

The real dividing line shouldn't be between working class Leave and Remain supporters. It should be between those who want to defend workers and migrants' rights and those who don't.

Stand Up To Racism has called a national day of action on Saturday against Ukip. It is calling for unity—whether people voted Leave or Remain—to push back the right and racism in the European elections.

Go to Stand Up to UKIP day of action on Facebook

# Donald Trump set to visit Britain in June—flood the streets with protests

**DONALD TRUMP** is coming to Britain in June for a three-day state visit from 3 June.

The visit of the vile US president is timed to coincide with the anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Full details are yet to be confirmed, but what can be predicted is a huge outpouring of rage.

Last time Trump dared to come to Britain—in July last year—some 250,000 people took to the streets of central London.

Thousands more trailed Trump's tour of Britain as he visited Oxford and Scotland.



Protesting during Trump's visit to Britain last year

That must happen again if the visit goes ahead.

The Together Against Trump group, which called the protests last time, has said it will "flood the capital with hundreds of thousands of protesters".

Trump's invitation is a sign of desperation from the Tories. They want to preserve the "special relationship" with the US.

Sabby Dhalu is from Stand Up To Trump, part of Together Against Trump.

She said, "All those that value peace and hope for a better world must take to the streets and say Trump is not welcome here!"

## Mueller won't beat Trump

THE announcement of Trump's visit comes as he is under scrutiny in the US.

Special counsel Robert Mueller last week delivered his report into Russian influence over Trump's 2016 presidential election campaign.

He found no direct connection, but showed that Trump had tried to undermine the investigation.

Many senior Democratic politicians

had been relying on the investigation to deal a blow to Trump.

Now some are calling for his impeachment.

But this is little more than a tactic to increase their own standing in primary election campaigns that are now underway.

Resistance to Trump must be led by action on the streets and in workplaces, not by the self-interested hypocrites at the top of society.